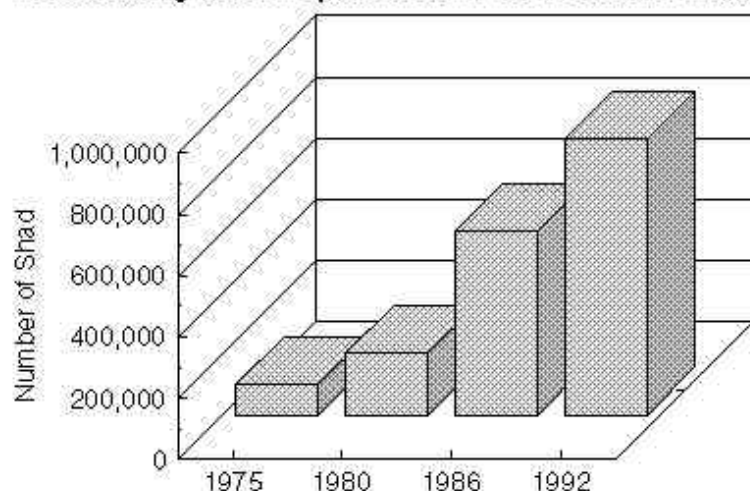


# Shad Return to the Delaware

At the turn of the century, the Delaware River supported the eastern seaboard's most abundant population of American shad. Years of over-fishing and pollution, however, decimated the shad population. In fact, by the 1930s, the river's oxygen supply was so low that the shad could not reach their spawning grounds north of Philadelphia.

The EPA played an important role in the state and federal partnership that took steps to restore this highly valued fishery. A shad management plan was developed that addressed the issues of poor water quality, physical obstructions and water use. As part of this initiative, sewage treatment plants were built to improve oxygen levels, and fish ladders were constructed to assist the shad in negotiating man-made obstacles.

**Rebounding Shad Populations in the Delaware River**



Although challenges still exist, the American Shad is now on its way to recovery. Prized for its natural resource and economic value, the shad population is now over 900,000 strong -- up from 100,000 in 1971. With the resurgence of the fishery, people are re-discovering the Delaware's rewarding recreational opportunities. In 1986, the river supported over 65,000 recreational fishing trips valued at more than 3 million dollars.

[Return to Water Quality](#)